

'Everyone and everyone's needs'

Black Unity Day: togetherness

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Rain dampened the surroundings but not the spirits of those participating in the Black Caucus' first Black Unity Day, held last night in the Black Cultural Center.

Originally scheduled for an afternoon program on Old Main Lawn, a crowd of more than 200 students came together in the Walnut Building for a program of speakers, singers, dramatists and dancers.

Leonard Howard, acting president of the Black Caucus said, "We've come together informally tonight to form a unified one, a total group."

Besides promoting unity within the black community, Howard said the purpose of the day also was to "project a new image for the Black Caucus."

"The University will not give us a damn thing unless we get together collectively and go to them with our demands and requests," he said.

Asking for support and membership, Howard said the Black Caucus is undergoing organizational changes to "include everyone and everyone's needs."

Along with a constitutional revision, the Caucus is adding five committees: educational, social,

political, family and external community services, to more adequately meet student needs.

Howard said the May 17 election of new officers also will help improve the image of the organization. "If you want to know why so many blacks drop out of Penn State, why so few blacks are employed, and why there's only one black arts festival each year instead of each term, elect the officers who will be your voice next year," he told the crowd.

Other speakers continued on the unity theme. Roy Austin, assistant professor of sociology, emphasized the uniqueness of blacks as a minority group, and said, "The old melting pot holds only a white stew. We have to reject the kind of equality that allows a man with one dollar to compete with the man with a million...our equality can be attained most readily through unity."

Reverend Leon Hall of the Black Christian Fellowship gave this ultimatum: "Either we're going to have to get it together or fold up."

Criticizing the black community for its lack of participation in the recent arts festival, Hall said, "Maybe we need to stop talking about what the man's doing to us, and start talking about what

we're doing to each other." First rousing his audience, then calling attention to the need for unity, Hall left the otherwise noisy crowd speechless.

The program provided light entertainment as well as the speakers. "M.S.C.D.," a student quartet consisting of Mike Wade, Steve Correll, Dave Sutter and Chuck Bynum, sang four-part harmony in "Up on the Roof" and several other tunes.

The MAC-J-J's, a modern jazz troupe consisting of 23 students and directed by Glynise Cooley, performed three routines: "Billie Holiday," "My Mother's Son-in-law" and "Grover Washington-Inner City Blues."

"Niggers, Negroes, and Penn State blacks, listen," said student poet Robert Williams. And the crowd hushed and listened while Williams, accompanied by bongos and bells, recited verse.

In between speakers and performers, the sisters of the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority led songs and danced. "We're here because we're a unit within the whole," said Marjorie Arthur (12th-elementary education). "We're here working for the cause of one, that's to unify blacks."